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Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Dialogue paper by local authorities*

Accelerating sustainable development: local action moves the world

I. Introduction

Background

1. In preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives is facilitating a worldwide review of local government progress in implementing Agenda 21 and other protocols adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This is being undertaken with the support and endorsement of the International Union of Local Authorities, the Fédération Mondiale des Cités Unies, the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and other local government associations. This preparatory process has included: extensive regional and, where appropriate, subregional consultations with local government leaders and technical experts (September 2000-December 2001); a worldwide local Agenda 21 survey of local authorities and their associations evaluating the extent of the implementation of local Agenda 21 plans; and an international think-tank meeting, held in June 2001, in Stavanger, Norway, which brought together regional and global experts.[1]

* Prepared by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), invited by the secretariat of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as the organizing partner of the dialogue segment for local authorities. The paper has been prepared in consultation with local authorities worldwide. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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2. The key finding of the review process is that significant movement towards sustainability has occurred at the local level. Local governments have demonstrated their commitment to achieving sustainable development through "Local Agenda 21", the role assigned to them in chapter 28 of Agenda 21 and reaffirmed at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in 1996 and the special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in 1997. Advances in sustainability have been made through good governance and changes in the daily functions of local government in natural resource management, urban development, waste management, public health promotion, social services and educational activities. Local governments have developed partnerships with major groups and other Governments to accelerate sustainability and support programmes and policies facilitating the implementation of the conventions on climate change, biodiversity and desertification, and other United Nations strategies.

3. Local governments can make a substantial contribution to national sustainability strategies. As such, national Governments are asked to consult actively with their local government counterparts in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to incorporate local initiatives into national reports and include local government representatives on national delegations to the World Summit.

Role of local government in realizing sustainable development

4. Over the past 10 years, local governments have built on their inherent strengths to become champions and facilitators of sustainable development. This success is due to their position as the sphere of government closest to the people and their ability to enhance both efficiency and democratic accountability. Local governments have developed participatory, multi-stakeholder strategies to implement sustainable development. They have promoted good local governance involving the recognition of the:

- Importance of transparency, accountability and participation in governance;
- Critical role of integration in breaking down the compartmentalization of policy-making and programme delivery within and between governments;
- Need to engage in strategic partnerships that bring diverse perspectives to the table;
- Central role that information, knowledge and capacity-building play in ensuring an informed and sustainable process.

5. This good local governance has enabled municipal governments to facilitate partnerships and to respond to local needs in addressing the economic, social and environmental challenges of sustainable development.[2]

Challenges for local sustainability

6. The understanding of local governments, and their implementation of sustainable development has evolved since 1992, and they now view sustainable development as more than an environmental movement. Priority local sustainable development issues include poverty reduction, equity, social justice and security.

7. The expanding scope of priorities for sustainable development must be seen in the context of several important processes: urbanization, localization, globalization and the evolution of governing institutions, which have the potential to either impede or facilitate sustainable development at the local level.

8. In addressing these global trends, all spheres of government must work with major groups to resolve current local challenges. They must ameliorate non-supportive and inefficient government structures and institutional frameworks; enhance the legitimacy of local governance structures; resolve jurisdictional conflicts and the compartmentalization of government; reinforce rural-urban linkages; address the concentration of economic power; increase local government access to resources; improve the management of resources; build commitment and leadership for sustainability; communicate more effectively the necessity of global sustainability; and, most importantly, deal with the underlying causes of unsustainability inherent in the way we produce, market and consume.

Key message: local action moves the world

9. Local governments can provide good governance and respond to the needs of their communities, creating a positive, cumulative effect on global environmental, economic and social conditions despite the jurisdictional and other barriers that continue to hamper sustainable development efforts. Local governments need to be key components of national sustainable development strategies if such plans are to succeed.

10. Local governments contend that sufficient, coordinated action has not yet taken place. Effective sustainability must alter our priorities, our mode of governance and indeed the very way we progress as a species. We have had a decade of learning and analysis that has resulted in a greater understanding of sustainable development. We have agreed on visions and goals for sustainable development. Now, we need to proceed from agenda to action.

II. Priorities for local sustainability

Issues to be addressed

11. Local governments have identified three priority issues for sustainable development: poverty and inequity, insecurity and environmental degradation, issues which remain substantially unchanged since 1992. Local efforts to implement sustainable development in the intervening decade have highlighted the critical importance of addressing these issues simultaneously using holistic and integrated solutions that are also responsive to specific local contexts. Future initiatives must place greater emphasis on addressing the social and economic problems that underlie environmental degradation, monitor implementation of initiatives and include long-term plans to prevent and mitigate potential disasters.

12. Addressing poverty and inequity, their increasing prevalence and the growing gap between rich and poor within countries and between the developed and developing worlds is integral to achieving sustainable development. Billions of people live without secure access to the necessities of life, in poor health, without adequate housing, access to fresh water, sanitation or other basic services. The inherent insecurity of their material existence encourages trading off long-term sustainability to meet immediate daily requirements. Many of our world's poorest citizens live in environmentally sensitive areas, which are also experiencing significant population growth and are in danger of irremediable damage. Desertification, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and other major environmental changes will result in even greater poverty in the future as those with the fewest resources lose what meagre means they currently possess while the privileged few continue to appropriate an ever greater proportion of the world's resources.

13. Insecurity stems not only from insufficient economic resources but also from the threat of natural and human-generated environmental disasters, unstable political systems and the threat of crime and war. Conflicts, often over the control of resources, contributes to environmental degradation by promoting the unsustainable use and destruction of natural resources and encouraging large-scale population movements, thereby jeopardizing ecosystems outside the immediate area of conflict. Currently, there are few mechanisms to facilitate in assisting the re-establishment of peaceful coexistence between former foes, respecting both their environment and their fellow citizens. The long-term approach to development necessary for sustainability requires security of person, home and country.

14. Over the past decade, human actions have intensified environmental degradation. The growing toxicity and ongoing destruction of our ecosystems contribute to increased poverty and insecurity, particularly among the most disadvantaged, who are also those least able to plan for or mitigate environmental change. Sustainable development initiatives to address environmental protection must necessarily provide for a more secure future for all citizens, especially those with the fewest resources. Only when people are secure in their basic needs can they be expected to embrace the forward-looking policies necessary to achieve a harmonious balance between human needs and the environment.

Changing contexts

15. Several long-term trends, urbanization, localization, globalization and the evolution of governing institutions, will influence the ability of all spheres of government to address the priority issues for achieving sustainable development in the next decade.

These trends can either hinder or facilitate sustainability depending on the nature of governmental action. The impact of these trends is beyond the control of any one Government and will require improved coordination and cooperation between and within spheres of government and global institutions.

16. Urbanization is an irreversible trend in the modern world. Nearly half the world's population currently resides in cities and towns, with absolute and relative numbers of urban dwellers predicted to increase in the next decades. Cities have enormous potential as economic and cultural centres, places of innovation and sites for the efficient use and movement of resources and the encouragement of multi-stakeholder approaches to policy-making. Cities also have the potential to magnify social, economic and environmental problems, including poverty, inequality, high unemployment, declining services and infrastructure, traffic congestion, crime, violence and ill health. Urban governments must expand their role in facilitating sustainability to meet the needs of their citizens within the context of local conditions.

17. The trend towards localization can build society's capacity to address sustainability by facilitating government action tailored to the unique social, ecological and economic conditions of each place. Localization has been pursued through constitutional change, decentralization and the devolution of power, with a number of Governments recognizing the value of subsidiarity.[3] While responsibility for the delivery of services is being funnelled to local governments, the authority and resources required to effectively meet the needs of citizens often is not.

18. At the other end of the spectrum, globalization will continue to affect local initiatives for sustainability. The increased cooperation, liberalization of trade and movement of capital resulting from globalization can support sustainability by encouraging more efficient use and movement of resources, enhancing access to information and facilitating the management of development issues across traditional jurisdictional boundaries. However, globalization offers significant challenges to sustainability, including the potential to destabilize or ignore Governments, shift global power centres, reduce cultural diversity and overwhelm official development assistance. Thus, globalization must be steered to symmetrically enhance the public, private and civic good, including a more equitable distribution of wealth.

19. The trend towards globalization has significantly altered the evolution of governing institutions. The past decade has been marked by increasing empowerment of non-elected multilateral bodies, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the increasing privatization of public services. Policy-making is shifting away from citizens and the public good. The credibility of the international community is at risk as poverty and inequity deepen and expand. By contrast, local governments have achieved widespread success in making government more inclusive by encouraging representation from and consultation with women, the poor, youth and other marginalized groups. Gains at the local level are being undermined by multinational bodies making macro-level decisions that affect local conditions.

III. Progress achieved

20. Overall global response to Agenda 21 has been inconsistent and inadequate. Local governments have responded strongly and are implementing local Agenda 21 as a strategic tool for conserving and managing local environments (see chaps. 9-22 of Agenda 21) and fostering good governance (see chaps. 24-32 of Agenda 21). Local governments are creating management structures that will permit an integrated approach towards sustainability and have begun implementing sustainable development policies in their areas of jurisdiction, including transport, water, land and waste management. They have come to recognize the importance of information-sharing, enhanced roles for civil society and other partners and a participatory and integrated approach to the incremental implementation of sustainability. Through this practical experience, local governments have found that sustainability makes social, economic, and environmental sense.

Proliferation of local Agenda 21 processes

21. Local governments have responded actively to Agenda 21, particularly chapter 28, through the widespread adoption of local Agenda 21 processes. Since 1992, more than 6,200 local governments in over 100 countries have established local Agenda 21 planning processes.[4] The Healthy Cities Programme of the World Health Organization (WHO), which has

goals similar to local Agenda 21, now involves more than 1,500 municipalities.[5]

22. Local Agenda 21 processes have been instrumental in enabling local governments to enhance local good governance. They have facilitated the involvement of major groups, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, NGOs, workers and trade unions, the private sector and other local stakeholders in local decision-making structures. Over 70 per cent of local governments with local Agenda 21 strategies in place solicit multi-stakeholder input, with the most inclusive processes occurring in least developed countries. Through these processes, local governments have established formal partnerships with major groups, ethnic minorities, community-based groups, the education sector, research and scientific institutions, the media, professional associations, international agencies, national Governments and other local governments to accelerate sustainability.[4]

23. Local government planning processes aimed at sustainability in developed nations often embody many local Agenda 21 public participation principles, even if they are not deemed as such. In Japan, 109 local governments have local Agenda 21 strategies and many others address environmental issues with similar participatory approaches. In Western Europe, new multi-stakeholder mechanisms are being implemented. Some 1,300 European local authorities, representing over 100 million citizens, have joined the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign, committing themselves to engaging in local Agenda 21 processes. All Swedish municipalities and over 90 per cent of local governments in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have adopted these strategies. In Australia, 177 local governments have adopted local Agenda 21 or similar sustainability strategies.[4]

24. Local governments dealing with complex political and economic transformations have also begun to embrace local Agenda 21 processes. Nearly 100 local governments in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Russian Federation have adopted local Agenda 21 plans. The trend towards the decentralization of decision-making authority from national to local levels in the Asia-Pacific region has led to expansion of local Agenda 21 processes in China, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea. In the Republic of Korea alone, over 170 local authorities have established local Agenda 21 plans.[4] In Latin America, local Agenda 21 has been a vehicle to promote equality and democracy in local government. Brazilian local Agenda 21 processes have resulted in local governments introducing participatory budgeting while Peruvian local governments are advocating links between local Agenda 21 processes and ongoing decentralization in their country.

25. Local Agenda 21 activities are entering a more mature phase of implementation in many countries. They provide a concrete framework for future success, particularly in facilitating dialogue on multi-sectoral responses to sustainability. The biggest challenge in the years ahead will be to maintain the momentum that was generated immediately after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to support local governments as they implement their sustainable development plans.

Climate protection

26. Today, 10 years after the launching of the Framework Convention on Climate Change at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and five years after Governments committed themselves to emissions reduction targets at Kyoto, national Governments continue to struggle to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the threat posed by global climate change. In contrast, many local governments have succeeded in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving local air quality and increasing sustainable transportation and efficient energy use, and, consequently, strengthening their economies. Local government leaders have also been active advocates of the local implementation of the Kyoto mechanisms and have attended all of the meetings of the Conference of Parties to the Convention, speaking at side events and presenting at official plenary sessions.

27. Local governments have reduced emissions by influencing energy use and, consequently, the production of greenhouse gas emissions within their jurisdictions. Municipal facilities have been retrofitted for energy efficiency and equipped with power-saving technologies. Comprehensive, city-wide strategies for climate protection include recovering methane gas at landfills, reducing waste intended for landfill by instituting recycling programmes, and providing alternatives to single passenger vehicle use and the unsustainable movement of goods. Increasing energy

efficiency and reducing fossil fuel consumption result in better air quality, financial savings and improved community liveability.

28. The 500 members of the Cities for Climate Protection campaign of the ICLEI, which account for approximately 8 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, work to cut local emissions and improve air quality. In the United States of America, local governments that are members of the Cities for Climate Protection campaign are already eliminating over 9.4 million tons of equivalent carbon dioxide (eCO_2) emissions per year, and saving more than $70 million in reduced energy and fuel expenditures. The Australian Cities for Climate Protection campaign, supported by a strong national commitment, includes 144 local governments, representing over 58 per cent of the country's population. In Australia, measures implemented by local governments during the campaign collectively reduced eCO_2 emissions by 78,000 tons during the years 2000 and 2001, and they anticipate a reduction of 184,500 tons in 2002. They have invested over $32 million Australian dollars in greenhouse gas abatement actions since 1999. In Europe, 100 local authorities have joined the Cities for Climate Protection campaign. Some Governments support national programmes, and the European Climate Alliance, a network of 850 local governments and Amazonian rainforest peoples, is designing and implementing local climate protection plans and preserving tropical rainforest by halving their greenhouse gas emissions and abstaining from the use of tropical timber. After the meeting of the Kyoto Conference of Parties in 1997, the Japanese Government passed a law recommending all local authorities prepare and implement climate protection plans.

29. Cities in developing countries must balance greenhouse gas emission reduction and air quality improvements with the need to develop municipal infrastructure to serve their citizens. Recently cities in India, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil and Chile began incorporating climate protection into municipal activities. These cities are working within the Cities for Climate Protection campaign to improve the efficiency of infrastructure and service delivery with methods that also improve energy efficiency and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Many of these cities are also incorporating climate protection in the construction of new housing by designing houses to maximize energy efficiency and locating them convenient to existing transportation services. Future gains may be realized through the Clean Development Mechanism, adopted as part of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Sustainable water use and waste management

30. Local governments have made improvements in fresh water and solid waste m...nagement (see chapters 17-22 of Agenda 21) since 1992. These sectors have been the targets of increased local government commitment and investment since 1992. Local governments have pursued inter-municipal cooperation through the formation of cooperative associations to more efficiently manage public utilities. They have established a local government water code, setting out principles for the responsible, sustainable use and management of fresh water. The 2001 Bonn International Conference on Freshwater recognized the crucial role of local government in the effective management of water resources.

31. Local governments have achieved some success in improving water management. Implementation of local Agenda 21 initiatives in the developing world has resulted in significant improvements in water quality and supply.[4] Water strategies worldwide are often pursued in conjunction with improved waste management and treatment. Initiatives include implementing regulatory and incentive mechanisms, such as pollution charges, to encourage sustainability; eco-procurement; facilitating the implementation of green technologies; public education; implementing of groundwater and surface water protection plans; and forging local government-community partnerships to access new water sources and improve water delivery services.[6]

32. Local governments, particularly in the developed world, report significant progress in waste reduction.[4] Household recycling programmes and the diversion of solid waste to composting and materials recovery facilities have resulted in waste reduction. Comprehensive, integrated strategies have achieved as much as a 70 per cent reduction in residential waste going to landfill. In the developing world, waste reduction initiatives include improving the social and economic circumstances of waste workers, education

programmes, and investing to facilitate improved waste collection and recycling.

Sustainable land use

33. Local governments have made considerable new commitments and investments in promoting sustainable human settlements (chapter 7 of Agenda 21) and protecting the natural environment (United Nations conventions on biodiversity and desertification). There are many local projects to protect habitats and species, replant forests and encourage the movement from landscaped parks to meadows of native plant species. Local authorities are combating desertification through the encouragement of sustainable agricultural practices, programmes to improve soil quality and sound water management.[7] Some have supported the creation of "eco-settlements" or "eco-housing" projects, incorporating green space, restoring the natural environment and promoting energy efficiency and low water consumption. Hundreds of cities are engaged in planning sustainable urban transport systems. Initiatives include integrated planning for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and minimizing the need to move goods and people through thoughtful community planning and enabling telecommunications technologies. Comprehensive land-use planning to promote sustainability is not yet commonplace. Only 35 per cent of local Agenda 21 schemes have sustainable land use plans or initiatives to preserve biodiversity.[4] Continuing efforts must address the impact of market forces on land use and will require enhanced partnerships between local governments, other spheres of government and the private sector.

Social development

34. The success of local Agenda 21 in promoting good governance through improved accountability, transparency and inclusiveness has enabled local governments to acknowledge the intimate relationship between environmental and socio-economic issues in the achievement of sustainability. Sustainability initiatives exist to address various socio-economic issues, including poverty alleviation, economic development, women's issues, family planning and employment. Local governments report improvement on some fronts, notably in community empowerment and the recognition of women's issues, but progress related to the alleviation of poverty and inequity lags behind.[4]

IV. Barriers

35. Individual local government successes abound. The decade has been marked by local commitment and pioneering action. However, these best practices have not been replicated, expanded or become commonplace because of systemic challenges and barriers to change. We must identify and focus attention on these inhibitors to success.

Government structures, capacity and institutional frameworks

36. The trend towards decentralization over the last decade reflects the acceptance by many national and subnational governments of the effectiveness of local action. Yet, paradoxically, local governments often are given the responsibility for the provision of services without the constitutional and legislative authority or access to resources necessary to properly undertake their new roles. These limitations inhibit the flexibility and innovation required to achieve sustainability and the expansion of good governance practices, increased efficiency and greater equity. The small scale of some local governments and their tendency to work in conjunction with few, if any, other local governments can impede the acquisition and sharing of information and best practices and reduce opportunities for building capacity for local implementation of Agenda 21.

Legitimacy in governance

37. Governments cannot hope to achieve sustainability without the active and willing participation of their citizens and their trust that government is acting for their best interests. Good governance has been held back by sceptical views of government, including a lack of accountability to constituents, insufficient involvement of citizens in the political process, inadequate representation of all stakeholder interests, insufficient transparency in the governing process and corruption.

Jurisdictional conflicts and the compartmentalization of Government

38. Sustainable development policies must address social, economic and environmental factors, which regularly transcend existing jurisdictional boundaries. Insufficient clarity regarding legislative jurisdiction may result in inaction on the part of all spheres of government on key issues, or in uncoordinated action where the policies of one sphere of government undermine the objectives of another. The division of responsibilities within a sphere of government can further complicate attempts at sustainability when departments and agencies with different responsibilities fail to work together or when neighbouring rural and urban local governments fail to coordinate planning. The lack of cooperation within and between spheres of government, both within nations and at the international level, inhibits the holistic planning necessary to address all factors in sustainability.

Concentration of economic power

39. The liberalization and deregulation of trade and capital markets have shifted authority and influence from the public to the private sector. Within the private sector, the trend towards the concentration of power continues at unprecedented speed. Thus the development and sustainability of economies and societies is increasingly determined by the decisions of a decreasing number of economic power centres that are not democratically accountable.

Allocation and management of resources

40. Local governments lack sufficient financial and human resources to properly implement sustainability initiatives, particularly when capital investments are required. When funding is available, the lack of local control over stable funding sources, as opposed to grants from other spheres of government, results in short-term programmes rather than the long-term planning necessary in order to address systemic problems. Furthermore, governments in some jurisdictions actually encourage environmental damage, distort trade and heighten inequities through unsustainable subsidies and taxation policies. Existing management instruments are often inappropriate for effectively planning and controlling financial, human and natural resources.

Lack of political will

41. Governments and their citizens have not placed enough emphasis on sustainability. Sufficient political will can bring about sustainable development, yet there are few incentives to encourage leaders to champion sustainability. The relative brevity of electoral terms encourages the adoption of short-term goals with immediate results over long-range planning for sustainability where the benefits will not be visible for years. Potential leaders in government, public administration and the community are not being recognized for their work in support of sustainability.

Communicating sustainable development

42. Sustainable development as a concept transcends cultural differences and addresses social, economic and environmental issues simultaneously, yet it is still perceived as an environmental movement with northern, middle-class objectives. This is in part due to the sporadic and incipient nature of many sustainable development projects. Many initiatives have not yet achieved long-term improvements for diverse groups, which will generate widespread support and momentum for sustainability.

Production and consumption patterns

43. Cultural norms that equate increased consumption with success are unsustainable in a world with finite resources and an expanding population. The appropriation of cheap labour and resources from developing countries to meet the ever-expanding cycle of supply and demand upon which the economies of developed nations, and increasingly also of developing nations, are based deepen global inequities and environmental degradation.

Overcoming barriers

44. Local government is on the front line of service delivery. It must have adequate authority and resources to address context-specific priority issues. Sustainability

will most likely succeed through local application within the context of cooperating spheres of government, where each sphere has its own area of responsibility yet coordinates and cooperates with others. Agenda 21 stresses greater integration of national and local policies and development plans; greater participation from civil society organizations; decentralized fiscal and administrative decision-making; and greater partnerships and cooperation between public and private sector organizations and between different levels of government. The combined implementation of these strategies can enhance government efficiency, accountability and transparency. Local successes show that the application of these Agenda 21 strategies can overcome these barriers.

V. Strategies for the future

45. Over the last decade, local initiatives alone could not shift global trends in favour of sustainability. In too many instances, they have not even solved our most pressing local sustainability problems. The reasons for these frustrated ambitions are almost too simple. Action strategies can be prepared for specific local realities, but they are impossible to implement in isolation from the policies, investments and programmes of other spheres of government. To respond strategically to the challenges of sustainability, and to successfully redirect local, national and global trends, greater political commitment and new approaches will be required.

46. This section outlines the major political actions required of all spheres of government to strengthen the link between the global Agenda 21 process and local realities. To accelerate the movement towards sustainability, governments and major groups must form alliances and partnerships for action, especially at the local level. Local Agenda 21 processes are the first tentative steps towards sustainability. Now we must follow agendas with actions to shape secure, equitable and sustainable communities.

Strengthen local government

47. Globalization, deregulation and the contraction of government over the past 10 years have fostered development but not equity or sustainability. The decade's unprecedented economic growth has too often promoted private gain at the expense of the public good. The 1990s "re-engineering" of government has been a largely anti-government agenda. Yet, the promotion of equity and sustainability as public values require a strong and leading role for government. What was needed, and what we most need now, is a positive agenda for redefining government as an effective agent for these essential public objectives.

48. Government leadership for equity and sustainability must be built on a solid local foundation. Government secures its legitimacy and support at the local level. If a system of government cannot be responsive, ensure the delivery of basic services and renew public norms at the local level, then the social contract between government and citizens either cannot be established or quickly erodes. In place of citizenship, an impatient, fractious and interest-driven civil society prevails. To prevent social fragmentation in rapidly changing societies, citizenship, the vehicle for partnership between the state and civil society, must be re-built through local institutions with the resources and power to fulfil their public mandates.

49. The first step towards sustainability should therefore be the strengthening of local government. Institutional change must improve local professional capacities, finance and enforcement mechanisms. Redesigned local governments must be place-appropriate and culturally relevant. Specifically, we must:

(a) Redesign local government for sustainable development

- Engage civil society and the private sector in the promotion of equity and sustainability by increasing accountability, transparency and inclusiveness in governance.
- Aggressively promote the equal participation of women and men, the young and old and other marginalized groups in local decision-making in all its forms.
- Redesign traditional departments and utilities so that they are rewarded primarily for achieving equity and sustainability outcomes.
- Continue the process of decentralization with a greater commitment to the principle of subsidiarity. This requires intergovernmental cooperation to ensure the re-allocation of

authority and resources, not just the delegation of responsibilities, to other spheres of government.

(b) Increase resources available to local government

- Increase access of local authorities access to the financial and human resources required to build effective local government capacity. All spheres of government must work together to develop new and innovative sources of financing for sustainable development, including increased revenue sharing and direct local access to capital markets.

(c) Invest in local leadership

- Local champions of sustainable development must be fostered and recognized. Recognition might be provided through representation on national initiatives, such as national councils on sustainable development, and through national and international recognition and incentive schemes.

- Create targeted programmes to support the development of local leadership for sustainable development, including local elected officials, municipal administrators, professionals and local civil society representatives.

(d) Strengthen public mechanisms for local sustainable development

- Reaffirm the commitment of all spheres of government to local Agenda 21 or similar multi-stakeholder development planning processes. Governments and donor institutions are encouraged to support the establishment of national local Agenda 21 campaigns. Local governments are strongly urged to formally link local Agenda 21 planning activities with the annual budgeting and statutory planning activities of the municipality. Sub-national, national and international investment programmes should actively factor the strategies and targets of local Agenda 21 action plans in the selection and design of projects for their support.

- Redesign the current diversity of planning and management instruments to create a consistent framework for integrated resource management that allows for investments and operations for local sustainable development with an efficient use of financial, human and natural resources.

- Redesign traditional mechanisms for planning, technology selection and resource allocation to more fully take account of social and environmental consequences. This would mean the full assessment of the local appropriateness, life-cycle costs, and sustainability implications of public technologies and the more aggressive establishment and enforcement of criteria for sustainable land-use as well as transport, energy and watershed management.

- Re-examine the use of direct and indirect subsidies and eliminate the use of perverse subsidies. Where markets must be regulated in response to clear public mandates, including through the use of subsidies, they should be regulated in favour of public interests.

Strengthen inter- and intra-governmental cooperation

50. The forces that are pushing development in inequitable and unsustainable directions are deeply entrenched in established institutional, economic and cultural practices. These practices are often systematic and must be changed through a strategic approach to governance. This can be achieved by establishing common sustainable development strategies between spheres of government that approach the issues holistically, address barriers, create mutually reinforcing relationships between the different spheres and sectors of government and have a long-term focus. Specifically, we must:

(a) Govern strategically for concrete local impact

- Examine more thoroughly how existing and pending development and infrastructure projects, institutional and fiscal reforms and long-term technology choices may shape and constrain local development as well as create a supportive framework for more sustainable and equitable private development.

- Establish active councils for sustainable development at the national and subnational level to coordinate and develop intergovernmental strategies for sustainable development including strong local government representation.

- Support the direct engagement of local and subnational institutions in international activities and partnerships, in order to promote their full participation in global social and economic activity.

(b) Create working alliances between spheres of government

- Establish focused, task-oriented alliances, involving all spheres of government, to jointly address priority sustainable development problems. These alliances would provide a framework for coherent public action without imposing generic, top-down solutions or inhibiting local innovation and distinctiveness. Participating governments would work together closely to develop implementation mechanisms and to identify and remove barriers that would hinder effective action. The work of the alliances, including their achievements, would be given high public visibility in order to further collaboration between the bureaucracies and political leaders of different spheres of government.
- Encourage inter-municipal and city-to-city cooperation as a mechanism to enhance cost-effective capacity-building and information sharing.

(c) Institute ecosystem-based planning

- Implement ecosystem-oriented planning and governance mechanisms and re-examine the legal boundaries of political jurisdictions to achieve better coordination between the boundaries of political, economic and environmental systems.
- Develop coordinated approaches and mechanisms to priority urban land management issues, including the establishment of guidelines for the sustainable planning and management of urban and peri-urban land resources, transportation infrastructure and intergovernmental policy coordination.

Foster international solidarity and cooperation

51. All spheres of government, not just national Governments, should be encouraged to develop solidarity and cooperation with foreign jurisdictions to implement Agenda 21 and its related conventions. This deepening solidarity can increase the resources and mechanisms available to support the pursuit of sustainable development. By engaging more spheres of government in international cooperation, greater civil society awareness and support can be generated for international processes and commitments. Specifically, we must:

(a) Reduce barriers to decentralized cooperation

- Increase the participation of subnational and local government representatives in the preparatory discussions and delegations for international conferences and negotiations.
- Formally recognize decentralized cooperation as a key mechanism for international development assistance, and increase policy and donor support for direct international partnerships and resource flows between the administrations of any spheres of government.
- Increase cooperation between international agencies, national Governments and local and subnational governments in using globalization as a tool to support sustainable development. This would require far greater transparency and openness in forums, such as international funding institutions and international trade and environmental negotiations that are driving global policy-making. All spheres of government require improved access to macro-economic policy information and decision-making forums.

(b) Mobilize all spheres of government to fulfil international commitments

- National Governments of developed countries must adhere to the existing commitment to provide a minimum of 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) for development assistance, and this should include resource transfers by all spheres of government (i.e., including subnational and local) in the measurement of development assistance.
- Support the engagement of local and subnational government in the fulfilment of international action strategies for sustainable development. For example, in order to meet their minimum commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, national Governments could direct funding to local

governments to support their proven greenhouse gas reduction initiatives.

- Support international campaigns that engage local and sub-national governments from around the world in collective actions to fulfil the conventions and commitments adopted at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development.
- Increase the amount of international development assistance funds that are made available for direct use by local public institutions.

Build a new culture of sustainability

52. Governments must use their policies and programmes to support sustainable practices and to encourage business and citizens to do the same. Specifically, we must:

(a) Adopt sustainable cultural norms to guide public policies

- Consider adopting the Earth Charter as a coherent and thoughtful set of cross-cultural values and principles to guide local and global leadership for sustainable development.
- Facilitate learning processes for governments and civil society to understand ethnic and religious diversity as an asset and source of development, and to reduce discrimination and hostility between groups, thereby laying the groundwork for peace and security.

(b) Use procurement to create markets for sustainable products

- Support procurement policies and practices at all levels of government that factor in the quality of goods and services and all costs and impacts over the life-cycle of a product into procurement decision-making. Remove regulatory barriers to sound procurement that promotes equity and sustainability.
- Establish collective procurement mechanisms for government institutions to create more effective public sector demand for sustainable products.

(c) Use public investments to promote sustainable consumption patterns

- Coordinate the plans and investments of different spheres of government for infrastructure, transportation systems and water and energy supply in order to provide consumers and public service users with greater options for sustainable and resource efficient lifestyles.
- Promote education and awareness campaigns and use fiscal and regulatory tools available to all spheres of government to provide incentives for more sustainable consumption patterns.

Accelerate the transition to sustainable communities and cities

53. Societies can only become sustainable if they are built upon sustainable local communities. All spheres of government must work together to accelerate the transition towards communities and cities whose policies, plans and actions are directed towards and supportive of sustainability. National Governments must ensure that their policies and programmes both remove barriers and create enabling environments. Specifically, we must:

- Undertake risk analysis and risk management of our cities to identify risk-prone buildings and infrastructure, systematically reducing their vulnerability to create more resilient living environments.
- Plan and invest for an accelerated transition from the fossil to the solar age, in particular towards solar cities that draw upon solar energy in its various forms such as active and passive heat gain, photovoltaics, wind, hydro-power and biomass, both for stationary and transportation purposes.
- Orient urban planning and investment towards resource-efficient structures to make the most economical use of human, natural and financial resources, and reduce pollution and liquid, solid and thermal wastes, thereby decreasing supply risks and increasing the resilience of our urban systems.

VI. Conclusions

54. In the decade since the Rio conference, local governments have come to support the principles of sustainability, equity and security as imperative goals, which must be implemented. Local governments, in partnership with other major groups, have taken the first successful steps to put these principles into action. Local governments ask that all governments, organizations and citizens also adopt these principles and move to make them a reality by implementing the strategies outlined in this paper.

55. Sustainability, equity and security can be achieved through a fundamental alteration of the values that shape and inform our lives. We must commit ourselves to living in harmony with our environment and with the fellow inhabitants of our planet and ensuring that our decisions reflect the interests of the generations to come. An acceptance of the moral and material imperative of sustainability should inform all our decision-making processes, both individual and collective.

56. Therefore, we need action, not just words, from all the people of the world to ensure that our planet remains hospitable to our existence. Those who have the greatest ability, in authority and in resources, also have the greatest responsibility to act. Governments bear an especially heavy burden for action as they are the guardians of the public good. Local government extends an offer of partnership for sustainability and asks fellow governments, other major groups and citizens to embrace the call to action.

Notes

[1] For a complete overview of this process see http://www.iclei.org/johannesburg2002.

[2] The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements global campaign on urban governance is working to further the concept of good local governance.

[3] The concept of subsidiaritiy suggests that service delivery should be performed by the most immediate sphere of government that can best address constituent needs while maintaining economic and administrative efficiencies of scale and scope.

[4] International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the secretariat for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Local Agenda 21 Survey*, 2001.

[5] WHO Healthy Cities may also have local Agenda 21 plans (http://www.who.int/hpr/archive/cities/regional/index.html).

[6] International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, *Local Government Water Report: Improving Local Management and Governance for a Shared Resource* (2001).

[7] World Forum of Mayors on Cities and Desertification, Bonn, Germany, 11-12 June 1999.